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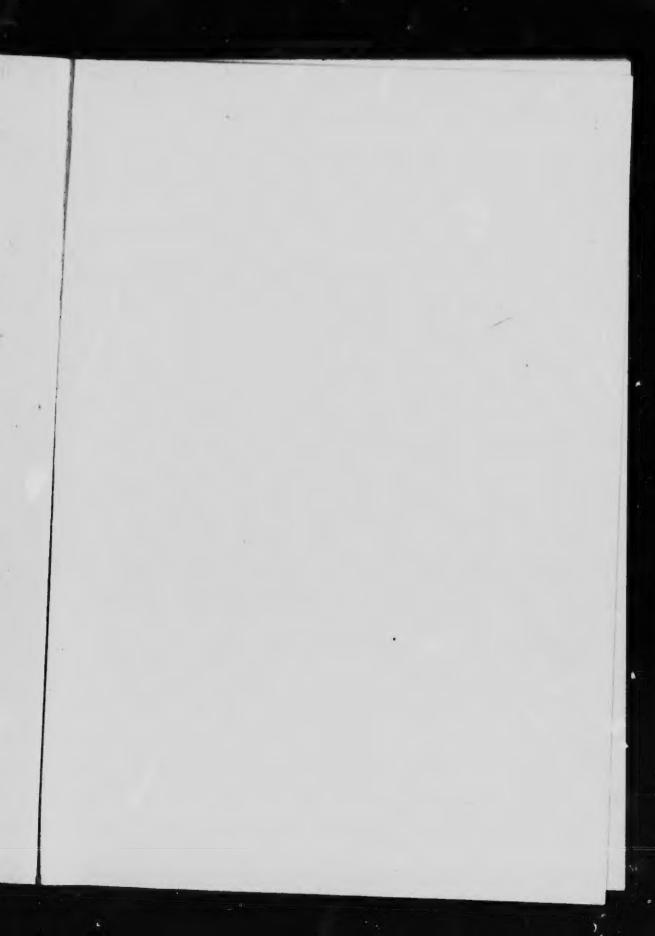
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## MORE SONNETS OF AN OFFICE BOY



# More Sonnets of an Office Boy

By
SAMUEL ELLSWORTH KISER

Author of "Ballads of the Busy Days", "Thrills of a Bell Boy", etc.

Illustrated by

FLORENCE PRETZ



Chicago, London, Toronto,
VANDERHOOF-GUNN CO. Limited
WINNIPEG
1908

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#### **EXPLANATORY**

THIS edition contains the Sonnets of the Office Boy in their entirety. The boy tells his whole story now, for the first time. He is permitted to express his feelings with a freedom that has not elsewhere been vouchsafed him. His fancy soars here to its most glorious heights and here, alas, are sounded the depths of his darkest despair. This has been made possible by a revision of some of the sonnets contained in the collection embracing the first outburst of the love-lorn youth and by the addition of them to this newer and fuller expression of his ambition and sorrow. The volume is put forth with the hope that a thorough understanding of the boy's case may result.

S. E. K.

I SOMETIMES think love ne'er is so intense

As when the boy, too young to have good sense,

Adores her who might almost be his ma,

And cares not whither, why, nor how, nor whence.

OMAR YUMYUM.

### MORE SONNETS OF AN OFFICE BOY

I.

THE new type writer lady's came; she's got

The chorus girls all beat a mile or two; Her eyes are big and kind of soft and blue;

Before she smiled at me I never thought
That life could be so pleasant; every spot
She touches seems to brighten up; I
knew

The minute I first seen her I was due To fill up with the gladness that she brought.

She shows a lot of class, all right, all right,
Her shape is lovely and she's got the
style;

I feel all kind of tickelish and light Around the heart when she looks up to smile:

Gee, but the world would get to seemin' bright

If I could only chew her gum awhile!

HE day before she come I thought I'd quit

Because they wouldn't let me have a raise:

I'm glad now that I didn't go; it pays Sometimes to think again and wait a

If I would know a place where I could

Twice what I'm gittin' here and holidays,

Without no lyin' when the home team plays.

I wonder if you think I'd take it? Nit!

I wouldn't jump this job while she is here, Because some morning mebby there might be

An earthquake come and then, all filled with fear,

The boss and clerk would run, and when she'd see

That I was not a-scared, but lingered near,

She might be glad to snuggle close to me.



OH, if you only knowed how much I like

To stand here, when the "old man" ain't around,

And watch your soft, white fingers while you pound

Away at them there keys! Each time you strike

It almost seems to me as though you'd found

Some way, while writin' letters, how to play

Sweet music on that thing, because the sound

Is something I could listen to all day.

You're twenty-five or six and I'm four-teen,

And you don't hardly ever notice me, But when you do, you call me Willie— Gee,

I wisht I'd bundles of the old long green And could be twenty-eight or nine or so,

And something happened to your otler beau.

WISH that when I was a baby they Had changed me like they do in books, and now

The nurse would come and weep and tell them how

She'd kept my lace-trimmed dresses hid away,

And I would be a count or duke some day,

And then the poor old nurse would raise a row

And take on awful till I made a vow To have her for my slave and let her stay.

Oh, wouldn't my sweet darling love me then!

She'd get to thinkin' I was grand and brave,

And never want to look at other men,

No matter hardly how I would behave,

And she'd be mine as soon as I'd say when,

Although I'd not be old enough to shave.

I'VE got a little hairpin that she wore; One day she took it out and scratched her head

Until I guess it must of nearly bled, And then I seen her drop it on the floor; I've got a place next to my heart that's sore

Where I have had it fastened with a thread,

And every night I put it in my bed—
I wish that sometime she would drop
some more.

It seems to me when she looks in my
eyes

That everything goes round and round and round.

And I can feel my heart begin to rise, And get up in my throat, almost, and pound,

And if she gives a little smile or sighs
My feet get light and hardly touch the
ground.

WISH a fire'd start up here, some day,

And all the rest would run away from

The boss and our long-legged book-keeper, too,

That you keep smilin' at—and after they. Was all downstairs you'd holler out and say:

"Won't no one come and save me?
Must I choke

And die alone here in the heat and smoke?

Oh, cowards that they was to run away!"

And then I'd come and grab you up and

Out through the hall and down the stairs, and when

I got you saved the crowd would cheer and then

They'd take me to the hospital, and so You'd come and stay beside me there and cry,

And say you'd hate to live if I would die.

#### VII.

HEARD the old man scoldin' yester-Because your spellin' didn't suit him

He said you'd better go to school at

And you was rattled when he turned away;

You had to tear the letter up and write It all again, and when nobody seen

I went and dented in his hat for spite;

That's what he got for treatin' you so

I wish that you typewrote for me and we Was far off on an island, all alone; I'd fix a place up under some nice tree, And every time your fingers struck a key I'd grab your hands and hold them in my own, And any way you spelt would do for me.



#### VIII.

CHE telephoned a little while ago And after she had quit and wasn't

I went and put my mouth up to it

Her soft, red lips had nearly touched, and, oh,

Somehow it kind of almost seemed as though

I breathed the breath she left; the very chair

She sets in is a thing I touch with

When I go past, because I love her so.

She keeps her toothbrush in her drawer; I

Her put it there this morning wher she knew

That I was lookin'; hers are white and clean;

I wonder if to-night, when she gets through

And no one else is here, it would be mean For me to brush my teeth a little, too?



THE lock is broken on her desk; last

When all the rest had went I stayed and let

Them think that I was keepin' busy vet.

And when the boss and clerk got out of sight,

I snuck her tooth brush from the drawer all right;

I kind of trembled and could feel the sweat

Come on my forrid, but I got it wet And started in to brush with all my might.

If we could git the things we try to git, We'd be as happy, all of us, as kings,

And never have to brace ourselves a bit To bear the sadness disappointment brings;

The brush was full of oil and dirt and grit;

I guess she'd used it on the keys and things.

SHE'S got a dimple in her chin, and, oh, How soft and cute it looks! Her eyes are blue;

The red seems always tryin' to peep through

The smoothness of Ler cheeks. I'd like to go

And lay my face up next to hers and throw

My arms around her neck, with just us two

Alone together, and not carin' who Might scold if they should see us actin' so.

If I was boss I'd have a carriage here
To take her to her home in every
night;

I'd tell the driver that he needn't fear To let his horses walk, and holdin' tight

With both hands I would whisper in her

While we were snuggled back in, out of sight.

YESTERDAY I stood behind your chair,

When you was kind of bendin' down to write,

And I could see your neck so soft and white.

And notice where the poker singed your hair,

And then you looked around and seen me

And kind of smiled, and I could seem to feel

A sudden, empty, sinkish feelin' where The vittles are when I have et a meal.

If I would know that some poor girl loved me

As much as I do you, sometimes I'd take

Her in my arms a little while and make

Her happy, just for kindness and to see The pleased look that acrost her face 'ud break

And hear the sighs that showed how glad she'd be.

#### XII.

WHEN you're typewritin' and that long-legged clerk

Tips back there on his chair and smiles at you,

And you look up and get to smilin',

I'd like to so and give his chair a jerk
And send him flyin' till his head went
through

The door that goes out to the hall, and

They'd picked him up he'd be all black and blue,

And you'd be nearly busted laughin' then.

But if I done it, maybe you would run
And hold his head and smooth his
hair and say

It made you sad that he got dumped that way,

And I'd get h'isted out for what I done—
I wish that he'd get canned and that
you'd stay

And suddenly I'd be a man some day.

#### XIII.

IF I was grown to be a man, and you And all the others that are workin' here

Was always under me, and I could

The place to-morrow if I wanted to, I'd buy an easy chair, all nice and new,

And get a bird to sing above your head.

And let you set and rest all day, instead

Of hammerin' them keys the way you do.

I'd bounce that long-legged clerk and then I'd raise

Your wages and move up my desk beside

Where you'd be settin', restin' there, and I'd

Not care about the weather—all the days
Would make me glad, and in the
evenings then

I'd wish 'twas time to start to work again.



THIS morning when our homely, longlegged clerk

Come in he had a rose he got somewhere:

He went and kind of leaned against her chair,

Instead of goin' on about his work,

And stood around and talked to her awhile.

Because the boss was out,—and both took care

To watch the door; and when he left uer there

He dropped the flower with a sickish smile.

I snuck it from the glass of water she Had stuck it in, and tore it up and put It on the floor and smashed it with my foot.

When neither him nor her was watchin' me-

I'd like to rub the stem acrost his nose,

And I wish they'd never be another rose.

ESTERDAY I watched you when you set

There with your little lunch-box in

your lap:

I seen you nibble at a ginger snap, And wished that where your lips had made it wet

I'd have a chance to take a bite and let My mouth be right where yours had been before:

And after you had got your apple e't, And wasn't lookin', I picked up the core.

I pressed my mouth against it then, and

It seemed almost the same as kissin' you,

Your teeth had touched it, and your red lips, too,

And it was good and tasted sweet, and, oh, I wished you'd bring an apple every day

And I could have the cores you'd throw away.

WISH, when you was through your work some night

And goin' home alone, and had your

Stuck in your stockin'—what you drew that day—

A robber'd come along with all his might And you'd be nearly scared to death, and right

There in the street you'd almost faint and say:

"Good robber, please don't hurt me-

And as he grabbed you then I'd come in sight.

I wish I'd be as strong as two or three Big giants thon, and when I handed

Out to him he'd be through, all in, and done,

And then you'd look and see that it was me,

And, thinkin' of the great escape you had,

You'd snuggle in my arms and just be glad.

#### XVII.

HER brother come this morning with a note

What said that she was home and sick in bed;

She's got an awful bad cold in her head—

They think it might run into the sore throat,

And oh, what if she'd not come back again,

And they would get some other girl instead

Of her to typewrite here, and she'd be dead?

I wouldn't care no more for nothin' then.

I wish I was the doctor that they'd get,
And when I'd take her pulse I'd hold
her hand

And say, "Poor little girl!" to her, and set

Beside the bed awhile and kind of let My arm go 'round her, slow and careful, and

Say, "Now, put out your tongue a little, pet."

#### XVIII.

SHE'S back to work again; I'm awful glad;

When she was sick it seemed to me as though

The clocks all got to goin' kind of slow,

And every key she pounds looked kind of

It's tough to have to hear her coughin'

I wish that I could take her cold and she Would know I took it, and not have to blow

Her nose no more, and be as well as me.

She takes some kind of cough stuff in a spoon,

I seen her lickin' it this morning when

She took a dose and put it down again,

And when the rest went out awhile at

I got her spoon and licked it, and it seemed

As though it all was something nice I dreamed.

#### XIX.

WHEN her and me were here alone, at noon,

And she had bit a pickle square in two.

I set and watched and listened to her chew,

And thought how sweet she was, and, pretty soon

She happened to look down at me and

"You seem so sad, poor boy; what's wrong with you?"

And then I got to shiverin' all through And wished that I was forty miles away.

I tried to think of some excuse to make, But something seemed all whirly in my head,

And so the first blame thing I knew I said:

"It's nothin' only just the stummick ache."

Sometimes I amost wisht that I was dead

For settin' there and makin' such a break.

#### XX.

THIS morning when we come to work I

Jammed in the elevator back of you, and there

They made you stick your elbow in me where

The mince pie lands; the lunch that I had brought

Was all smashed flat, but still I didn't care;

You leaned against me, for you couldn't stand

Because the ones in front were crowdin'

My nose was pressed deep into your back hair.

I wish we'd had to go ten times as high, Or else that we'd be shootin' upward yet,

And never stop no more until we'd get Away above the clouds and in the sky, And you'd lean back forevermore and let

Your hairpins always jab me in the eye.



LAST night I dreamed about her in my sleep;

I thought that her and me had went

Out on some hill where birds sung 'round all day

And I had got a job of herdin' sheep.

I thought that she had went along to keep

Me comp'ny, and we'd set around for hours'

Just lovin', and I'd go and gather flowers

And pile them at her feet, all in a heap.

It seemed to me like heaven, bein' there With only her besides the sheep an birds,

And us not sayin' anything but words About the way we loved. I wouldn't care

To ever wake again if I could still Dream we was there forever on the hill.



#### XXII.

AST night I heard Jones astin' you to go To see the opery next Thursday night,

And you said yes-and he'll be settin' right

Beside you there all through the whole blamed show,

And you'll be touchin' him with your elbow,

And mebby he'll say things that tickle

And buy a box of chock'luts for you, too,

And I'll not be around nor never know.

I wish I'd be the hero on the stage, And you was the fair maiden that got stoled.

And he would be the villain that would hold

You frettin' like a song-bird in its cage— And then I'd come along and smash him one,

And you'd say: "Take me, dear, for

what you done."



#### XXIII.

WHEN I was dustin' off her desk one day,

And she was standin' there, I took the

She writes on when she gets dictates and had

A notion to tear off a leaf and lay

It up against my heart at night, when they

Was something made her come to where I stood

And say, "Poor boy," as softly as she could—

It almost seemed to take my breath away.

That night I couldn't sleep at all becuz

The thoughts about them words that
she had said

Kep' all the time a-goin' through my head,

With thoughts about how beautiful she wuz,

And then I knowed she loved me, too, or she

Would not of cared how hard I worked, you see.

#### XXIV.

WISH, some day, when she's typewritin' and

I've took a note out for the boss somewhere,

They'd be some outlaws sneak in here and scare

That long-legged clerk to death and then the band

Would steal her, and nobody else would dare

To try to save her, and they'd run away To where they had their cave, and keep her there,

And ast more for her than her folks could pay.

Then I would get a gun and bowie-knife, And take the name of Buckskin Bob or Joe,

And track them to their den, and then I'd go

A-galley whoopin' in, and save her life, And she would say: "My hero's came at last!"

And we'd stand there and hold each other fast.

AST night, when she'd got on her coat and hat.

And felt her dress behind and then her hair.

To see if everything was all right there.

She stopped and said: "Well, now, just look at that!"

And then put out one foot a little bit,

And says: "Ain't that provokin'? I declare,

The string's untied!" She put it on a chair,

A-motionin' for me to fasten it.

So then that long-legged clerk he pushed me back

And grabbed the shoe-strings that were hangin' down-

I wish I was the strongest man in town-

Oh, wouldn't I of let him have a whack! And I'd of kicked him so blamed hard I'll bet

He'd wonder what he might come down on yet.



#### XXVI.

I'D like to have a lock of her brown hair,

For that would be a part of her, you know:

And if she'd tie it with a little bow Of ribbon, then I'd fasten it somewhere Clear down inside, next to my heart, to wear.

And fix it over every week or so,

When I changed undershirts, or maw she'd go

And raise a fuss because she found it there.

One day when bizness wasn't on the boom

She trimmed her finger-nails, and one piece flew

To where I was, almost acrost the room;

I watched the spot where it went tumblin' to.

And now a piece of her is mine; it come Right from the end of her dear little thumb.

#### XXVII.

MY darling, often when you set and think

Of things that seem to kind of bother you,

You put your pencil in your mouth and chew

Around the wood, and let your sweet teeth sink

Down in it till it's all marked up and split,

And yesterday I seen you when you threw

A stub away that you'd bit up; it flew Behind the bookcase, where I gobbled it.

I put it in my mouth, the way you'd done, And I could feel the little holes you made—

The places where your teeth sunk in—

My tongue tight up against them, every one,

And shut my eyes and then you seemed to be

There with your lips on mine and kissin' me.

#### XXVIII.

OUR homely clerk took her out for a

Last Sunday in a buggy, and they rode Around all through the parks; I wisht I'd knowed

About it and the horse would kind of shied,

And then got scared and run and kicked, and I'd

Of been a piece ahead and saw him jump

And leave her hangin' on alone, the chump,

And she'd of been so 'fraid she'd nearly died.

Then I'd of give a spring and caught the bit,

And landed on the horses' back, where

The people there could see me doin' it,
And when I got her saved the crowd
would call

Three cheers for me, and then she'd come and fall

Against my buzzum, and he'd have a fit.

#### XXIX.

ONE morning when the boss was out

And when the clerk was at the bank, and me

And her was here alone together, she Let out a screech and jumped up in the air

And grabbed her skirts and yelled: "A mouse," And there

One come a-runnin' right at her, and, gee,

There wasn't a blamed thing that I could see

To whack it with, except an office chair.

I grabbed one up and made a smash and hit

Her desk and broke a leg clear off somehow,

And when the boss came back and looked at it

He said that I would have to pay, and now,

When ma finds out I know just what I'll git—

Next pay-day there will be an awful row.

#### XXX.

WHEN I was tellin' ma, two days

About our beautiful typewriter girl She dropped the dough and give a sudden whirl

And said: "She's twic't as old as you, you know—

She must be twenty-five or six or so.

Don't think about her any more, my dear,

And you and me'll be always happy here—

Besides she's nothing but an old scarecrow."

It makes me sad to hear her talk that way;
My darling's just a little girl almost—
I can't see why ma give her such a
roast,

And I could hardly eat my lunch next day,

For every time I took a bite of bread I almost hated ma for what she said.



#### XXXI.

THE other day a rusty pen got stuck Away deep in her finger, and she held Her poor, dear little hand up then and yelled

For me to hurry over there and suck

The poison out, and when I went I struck

My toe against the old man's cuspidor And rolled about eight feet along the floor

Before I knew what happened, blame the luck.

When I set up and looked around, at last

That long-legged, homely clerk was there, and so

He had her finger in his mouth, and, oh,

I'll bet you I'd a' kicked him if I dast.
I never seen the beat the way things
go

When there's a chance for me to stand a show.



#### XXXII.

I DON'T care if she's twic't as old as me,

For I've been figgerin' and figgers shows

That I'll grow older faster than she grows,

And when I'm twenty-one or so, why, she Won't be near twic't as old as me no more.

And then almost the first thing that she knows

I might ketch up to her some day, I s'pose,

And both of us be gladder than before.

When I get whiskers I can let them grow All up and down my cheeks and on my chin,

And in a little while they might begin To make me look as old as her, and so She'd snuggle up to me and call me "paw."

And then I'd call her "pet" instead of "maw."

#### XXXIII.

IT'S over now; the blow has fell at last; It seems as though the sun can't shine no more,

And nothin' looks the way it did before;

The glad thoughts that I used to think are past.

Her desk's shut up to-day, the lid's locked fast;

The keys where she typewrote are still; her chair

Looks sad and lonesome standin' empty there—

I'd like to let the tears come if I dast.

This morning when the 'oss come in he found

A letter that he'd got from her, and so He read it over twice and turned around And said: "The little fool's got married"; Oh,

It seemed as if I'd sink down through the ground,

And never peep no more—I didn't, though.

#### XXXIV.

THE chap's a beau we didn't know she had,

He come from out of town somewhere,

they say;

I hope he's awful homely, and that they Will fight like cats and dogs and both be sad.

But still there's one thing makes me kind of glad:

The long-legged clerk must stay and

work away,

And, though he keeps pretendin' to be gay,

It's plain enough to see he's feelin' bad.

I wish when I'm a man and rich and proud,

She'd see me, tall and handsome then,

and be

Blamed sorry that she didn't wait for me,

And that she'd hear the people cheerin'

When I went past, and down there in the crowd

I'd see her lookin' at me sorrowf'ly.

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